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while one or two more touches of white may be seen on the wing-coverts and middle of abdomen. The ground color above is yellowish-green, below buff. A distinct line of yellow marks the side of the face. Eye, bill and feet black or dusky. Total length 5 inches.

Ptilotis cinerea (Salvad.) the Gray Honey-eater is much larger than the preceding species measuring about 8 inches in length. Upper surface with tail is brown, gray of a somewhat dingy hue, marking the under body and head. The bill is noticeably strong and curved. Its color is black. The eyes are black and prominent. White quills are conspicuous on the wings and tail.

Another interesting member of the *Meliphagidæ* found by Senor D'Albertis in 1872 is *Melidectes torquatus,* so-called from the torque or partial circlet of white, around the neck. Like its race it has the curving bill, long tail, bare orbits and other peculiar marks which characterize the honey eaters. This species is fuscous above, tail and wings dark olivaceous, containing white spots on the black inserscapular feathers. Black or dark appears on the side face and throat, and again over the upper breast below a band of white somewhat longer. This is margined below by a narrow line of dull yellow about the same tint as that around the eyes and side neck. Under parts are mainly whitish, passing into yellowish near the vent and much marked with black spots along the sides. Feet, bill and iris are almost black. The sexes do not differ noticeably and are both about 8.5 inches in total length.

EDITOR'S TABLE.

—THE greater part of the American newspaper press needs a radical change of heart in the matter of reporting on subjects which come within the domain of biology It would pay the leading newspapers at least to have a scientific editor or referee to whom all paragraphs and articles on such subjects should be referred before publication. As the case now stands, it is not safe for any person to accept their statements in the department referred to, as truth. It is to be supposed that newspapers, with some conspicuous exceptions, prefer to publish the truth, and are fully impressed with the fact that their circulation depends largely on the trustworthiness of the statements which they make. The conspicuous announcement of false statements by newsboys may sell more copies on the street, but such publication can scarcely invite regular subscribers. We have, in previous numbers of THE NATURALIST, selected a few cases where foreign scientific journals have been misled by some of the customary misstatements and fictions of the American press, and we regretfully allege that the only safe course for scientific journals to pursue is to ignore everything that proceeds from this source, unless it appear over some responsible signature. This state of affairs is regrettable, since, in many respects, American journalism is the best in the world. It should maintain this position by securing accuracy in the direction referred to. Popular interest in biology was never greater than it is now, and a newspaper whose reports in this direction are reliable would certainly profit by it. This statement covers all cases, from the latest discoveries in bacteriology, paleontology, etc., down to descriptions of the habits of wild and domesticated animals. It would be better to publish nothing at all than the fictitious and inaccurate statements to which we are accustomed. These naturally diminish the respect in which the press is held, and reflect on our character as a people among the nations of the earth.

—THE proposition to consolidate the scientific work done by the United States Government into a single bureau has been recently made. Such schemes are pleasing to the eye, but their practical bearing is of far greater importance both to the Government and to science. The proposition has been opposed on good grounds, and such as should be, in our estimation, fatal to it. It is a good general rule not to "put all one's eggs into one basket," when there is anything precarious about the basket. Moreover, it is obvious that different departments must have their own scientific assistants, precisely as they have their own employees in other directions, if their work is to go on without continual interruption and loss. The experience of the departments and bureaus with the Government printing office has been cited in proof of the evil effects of such consolidation. The evil is becoming so apparent that it is now evident that the time has come for the work of that bureau to be restricted to congressional printing, and that for departmental printing each department shall have its own printing office. This is especially important as regards the productions of the Government scientific experts. Their results may lie in the hands of the Government printer for two or three years before publication, a state of affairs which should not exist in a progressive country. The progress of science is rapid, and our bureaus at Washington should be able to publish their results as soon as they are prepared for the press.

—A COLLECTION of living monkeys and snakes was recently seized by the New York Custom House authorities and sold by auction for the nonpayment of duty. It is strange that our tariff law has not yet been corrected so as to permit the importation of such objects free. They contribute to the educational material of the country both while living and after their death, and it would seem that the scientific work of the country should command sufficient respect to enable such a change to be made. Of course the Committee of Ways and Means has no especial desire to stimulate the growth of the native species of monkeys and snakes by levying duties on foreign species. We venture the assertion that the native production of these articles will not be seriously affected by acts of Congress.

RECENT LITERATURE.

Experimental Morphology.[1]—It is a pleasure to learn that the activity of the new German school of "Entwicklungsmechanik" has stimulated so happy a response on this side of the ocean as that in the book before us. The author's aim is to collect, in order, the observations and results thus far gained by the experimental method as applied to the understanding of "*why*" organisms develop as they do. Knowing, then, what has been attempted, we may more clearly advance with definite purpose and prospect of success.

The present volume treats of the effects of outside reagents upon *protoplasm:* three following volumes are promised, to treat in the same way, *growth, cell-division, differentiation.*

Such agents are somewhat arbitrarily divided into the following heads of chapters: chemical agents; varying moisture; density of the medium; molar agents; gravity; electricity; light; heat.

The chapter on chemical agents considers the change in motion, change in metabolism or the death of organisms acted upon by various

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[1] Experimental Morphology. Charles Benedict Davenport. Woodcut, pps. 280. The Macmillan Co., 66 Fifth Ave., New York. Price, $2.60.